

IOWA OUTDOORS

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

www.state.ia.us/government/dnr/index.html

Editor: Mick Klemesrud, 515/281-8653

mick.klemesrud@dnr.state.ia.us

Jan. 28, 2003

1. Following Radio Tagged Fish Under the Ice – by Joe Wilkinson
2. Iowa River Otters Explore New Homes – by Lowell Washburn
3. New State Land to Benefit Songbirds
4. Outdoor Education Workshops Scheduled
5. Johnson County to Host *Fish Iowa!* Workshop April 5
6. DNR Unveils New Web Site
7. Ice Fishing Report

FOLLOWING RADIO TAGGED FISH UNDER THE ICE

By Joe Wilkinson

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

The shrill ‘blip, blip, blip’ of the radio receiver grew just a little louder as our boat passed over a spot about 40 feet from the island bank, just off the main channel on the Mississippi River. “It should be right about...here,” declared Greg Simmons. As Simmons dropped anchor, Lewis Bruce cut the motor.

Below us, swam a 24-inch channel catfish. We couldn’t see it. However, a surgically implanted transmitter told us we were right on top of it. The two fisheries technicians broke out the monitoring equipment. Within a couple minutes, we knew that the nearly three-pound catfish was sitting just above a sandy bottom in 33 to 34 feet of water. The current, in this cut which leads to Ackerman’s Lake, downstream from Guttenberg, was only 8/100ths of a foot per second, nearly nonexistent. With a hand-held GPS unit, Simmons marked the spot.

The data were entered alongside figures from a 17-inch walleye, pinpointed about 20 minutes earlier, below a wing dam in nine feet of water. Simmons wondered why it wasn’t sitting a little deeper. “It’s a little surprising. Usually, walleyes seek out the deepest water. Often, though, they will be *near* the deep water, not always *in* the deepest water.” A little later, we radio-tracked another walleye, in 12 feet of water, near the Wisconsin side in Cassville Slough.

Biologists from the Department of Natural Resources fisheries management office at Manchester are out a couple times a week, tracking the tagged fish. When weather allows, they'll be aboard a conventional flat-bottom. When the thermometer bottoms out and there's more ice than icy water showing, a hovercraft gets them out to the fish. The study is paid for out of fishing license and excise fee dollars.

Radio telemetry is a standard method for managing fish populations across Iowa. What's unusual about this study, though, is where the 70 transmitter-carrying walleye, catfish and smallmouth bass are found. All were tagged on the inland Turkey River, 32 miles from the mouth of the Mississippi. Even from there, they have spread out for several miles, searching out winter habitat. "During certain times of the year, especially ahead of winter, these fish will move long distances to get to the habitat they need," explains Simmons.

While the study goes on year-round, winter findings indicate that deep water is a 'must'. "There are holes in the Turkey River that are 10, even 20 feet deep, during warmer months," says Bruce. "However, lower winter flows and ice formation reduce the water available." Lacking enough deepwater habitat, he says they migrate to the Big River.

While about half the tagged smallmouth and walleye migrate out of the smaller river, nearly all of the catfish being studied make the trip. "We are letting the fish show us what kind of habitat they need during different seasons," underscores Simmons. "We can use the information to protect critical areas; maybe even try to restore some of the areas fish need to survive." As an example, Simmons suggests the prospect of more deep water habitat on the Turkey River, reducing the urge of fish to migrate long distances to unfamiliar territory.

As the study develops, it will pay off for anglers, too. "If conditions are good for nine months of the year, but then drop off during cold weather for instance, we can pinpoint what is missing and try to re-create that," says Simmons. "Winter stress can be high on migrating fish. By keeping them closer to home, reproduction and growth should improve and eventually, angler success, too." Biologists are especially watching the results, to see if upstream habitat improvement can overcome 'in stream obstacles', such as low-head dams, which impede fish movement up and downriver.

Ice Fishing/Shallow Sloughs

Our first extended cold weather has added a thick layer to the rather 'iffy' early season ice. And that means ice anglers are heading for the lakes. Solid ice increases angler traffic on the backwaters of the Mississippi River, too. The network of backwater lakes and sloughs throughout the Upper Mississippi pools rate as top ice fishing spots in the winter. A vice-like squeeze, though, on those backwaters raises growing concern for over wintering panfish.

Prior to development of the lock and dam system in the 1930s, those backwater lakes were six to eight feet deep. Over time, those depths have shrunk to three or four feet. “The bottoms are filling in with silt; a half inch to an inch a year,” cautions DNR fisheries biologist Scott Gritters. “At the same time, panfish really concentrate into those backwaters during the winter. When ice freezes down from the top, it really squeezes fish into a small area. Sometimes, the ice goes all the way to the bottom.”

Even if fish have room to navigate, extended snow and ice cover drive down oxygen levels. That leads to stress in the over wintering fish, even mortality. Dredge cuts offer a partial solution. However, they are expensive propositions and don’t address the original problem of siltation. And meager funding for the work is shrinking, too.

A \$2 billion allotment for environmental management projects (EMPs) was okayed by Congress, when the Alton, Illinois lock was expanded in the 1980s. However, five Upper Mississippi River states (Iowa, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Missouri) must compete for a shrinking pool of money for expensive dredging programs. Iowa’s first project under the program was at Brown’s Lake, south of Bellevue. For \$2.6 million, extensive dredge cuts restored valuable winter habitat. The project costs, though, severely restrict how many can be funded. On the Iowa side of the Mississippi, similar work has been done at Big Timber, south of Muscatine and at Bussey Lake, just above Guttenberg. One is set to get underway at Mud Lake, near Dubuque. Another is proposed at Lansing.

“They help quite a bit, yes,” agrees ice angler Roger LaBarge of Sherrill, as he walked off Bussey Lake a few days ago. “We caught some really big bluegills (before the cold snap), right on the cut. Before they dredged, it wasn’t even worth fishing.”

Improved ice fishing, though, is basically a side benefit. The EMPs provide the critical deeper water, little current habitat required by over wintering panfish. Only those fish which survive the winter will be around during warm weather for reproduction or latching on to an angler’s offering.

Meanwhile, EMP funding has dropped from \$33 million last fiscal year, to just \$12 million this year.

###

IOWA RIVER OTTERS EXPLORE NEW HOMES

By Lowell Washburn

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

CLEAR LAKE--Due to a unique partnership involving Iowa fur trappers and the Department of Natural Resources, wild river otters are continuing to expand their range across Iowa.

"Our current mission is to introduce a population of native, Iowa-produced river otters into new watersheds that do not currently support the animals," said DNR Furbearer Resource Specialist, Ron Andrews.

"Our program design is really quite unique. Essentially, we have enlisted the aid of licensed Iowa fur takers to find and capture otters within watersheds where the furbearers are most numerous," said Andrews.

"The otters are live trapped by selected trappers using foot hold traps. When an animal is captured, the trapper notifies the DNR. We transfer the otters into cages and transport them to their new home. The whole process is usually complete within a few hours."

Trappers are paid an expense fee of \$100 for each otter they trap for release. According to Andrews, trappers are the most efficient and cost effective way for the DNR to obtain releasable otters.

"We have currently designated 12 new sites for otter releases, and hope to place a total of 10 otters into each new stream" said Andrews.

"Our goal is to trap and relocate about 30 wild otters per year. Our in-state transplants began in 1999, and so far we've relocated a total of 81 animals."

IOWA'S RIVER OTTER recovery program began in 1985 when the DNR released 16 otters at Red Rock Reservoir. The animals were obtained via a three-way trade between Iowa, Kentucky, and Louisiana. The otters were trapped from the wild in Louisiana and purchased for release by Kentucky. In turn, Iowa supplied Kentucky with two wild trapped turkeys for each otter released here.

Since 1985, a total of 344 river otters have been released into 25 Iowa watersheds. All releases have been successful in establishing wild populations, and otters are currently expanding into adjacent stream corridors. To date, river otters have been reported in 95 of the state's 99 counties. Natural reproduction has been documented in 76 of those counties.

The DNR is currently working with the scientific authority branch of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to establish a regulated [otter] fur harvest season in Iowa.

"Our goal is to have a season in place by the fall of 2005," said Andrews. "To prevent over harvest, we'll be looking at a strict quota system -- either through our electronic licensing system or possibly through a season bag limit for each otter trapper. Whatever we do, each animal will have to be tagged and the DNR will keep extremely close tabs on the harvest. As is the case with other furbearers, river otters are a renewable resource and a limited season will not jeopardize opportunities to view these intriguing animals in the wild.

"There's no question that the otter's ability to survive and adapt to new environments has far surpassed our wildest expectations, and I think there's little doubt that the species will soon be present in every Iowa county," said Andrews.

More than 80 percent of Iowa's river otter restoration has been paid for by the state's hunters, trappers, and anglers.

###

NEW STATE LAND TO BENEFIT SONGBIRDS

DES MOINES – The Iowa DNR has acquired an 80-acre tract of land that borders the west side of the Cedar Creek Unit of Stephens State Forest, near Williamson.

Nearly all of the land is in timber and has important benefits to non-game wildlife, said Doug Harr, with the DNR's wildlife diversity program. "We thought it was pretty important to migrating and nesting songbirds," he said. "And as the hickories age, it has the potential to have nursery colony habitat for the Indiana bat, which is listed as a federally endangered species, so that was attractive to us."

The new property is only accessible through the existing Cedar Creek Unit. No vehicles will be allowed on the property.

The land was purchased through a federally appropriated state wildlife grant and a matching donation from the National Wild Turkey Federation. It will be managed for the Kentucky warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, Scarlet Tanager, Yellow Throated Vireo and other warblers, vireos and flycatchers.

"This purchase couldn't have been possible without the generous donation from the National Wild Turkey Federation," Harr said. "This should also provide an excellent opportunity to expand turkey and deer hunting in southeast Iowa."

The spring turkey hunting seasons, which runs from April 14 through May 18, will not conflict with the songbird nesting season, Harr said. The new property will be managed jointly by the wildlife and forestry bureaus.

The DNR acquired the property on Dec. 20 for \$28,000.

For more information, contact Bruce Ehresman at 515-432-2823.

###

OUTDOOR EDUCATION WORKSHOPS SCHEDULED

DES MOINES – The Iowa DNR is sponsoring workshops for K –12 educators, scout leaders and other youth educators on Iowa's outdoors.

Workshops are scheduled for Feb. 3 and 10, from 4 to 7 p.m., in Van Allen Hall at the University of Iowa in Iowa City; for Feb. 22, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Springbrook Conservation Education Center, near Guthrie Center. Workshops are also scheduled for April 5 and 12, from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Heartland AEA, in Johnston; for April 9 and 10, from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the AEA 1, in Dubuque; for April 11, from 4:30 to 8:30 p.m., April 12, from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. and April 29, from 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at Oak Grove Park, in Hawarden, and April 23 and 24, from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the AEA 1, in Elkader.

Educators will be introduced to several environmental activities through Project WILD, Aquatic WILD and Project Learning Tree. Participants will take home the manuals with Iowa supplements containing background information about Iowa's resources and contact names.

"Participants need to dress for the weather and be prepared to do some activities outdoors, weather permitting," said Barb Gigar, aquatic education coordinator for the DNR.

To register for the Feb. 3 and 10 workshop, contact Ed Saehler at 319-335-9289 or by e-mail at edward-saehler@uiowa.edu. There is a \$15 fee for the Project Learning Tree materials. To register for the Feb. 22 workshop, contact Regina Lloyd at 641-747-2276 or by email at glloyd@iastate.edu. There is a \$10 registration fee and a \$15 cost for the Project Learning Tree materials.

To register for the April 5 and 12 workshop, contact Cindy Blobaum at 515-277-6110 or by e-mail at cindybb@juno.com. There is a \$15 cost for the Project Learning Tree materials and graduate credit is available. To register for the April 9 and 10 workshop, contact Peg Christensen at 563-566-3310 ext. 623 or 1-800-942-4668 or by e-mail at pchristensen@aea1.k12.ia.us. There is a \$15 fee for the Project Learning Tree materials and graduate credit is available.

To register for the April 11, 12 and 29 workshop, contact Sunday Ford at 712-552-3057 or by email at soococon@acsnet.com. There is a \$15 fee for the Project Learning Tree materials and graduate credit is available. To register for the April 23 and 24 workshop, contact Peg Christensen at 563-566-3310 ext. 623 or 1-800-942-4668 or by e-mail at pchristensen@aea1.k12.ia.us. There is a \$15 fee for the Project Learning Tree materials and graduate credit is available.

Participants must register to attend the workshop. Information about the manuals is available on the DNR website. Go to fisheries and click on the education link.

For more information, contact Gigar at 641-747-2200.

###

JOHNSON COUNTY TO HOST *FISH IOWA!* WORKSHOP APRIL 5

GUTHRIE CENTER – The Johnson County Conservation Board is holding a *Fish Iowa!* training on April 5, at the F.W. Kent Park, near Oxford. The workshop runs from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. There is a charge of \$7 for lunch.

For more information, contact Brad Freidhof at 319-645-2315 or by e-mail at conservation@co.johnson.ia.us.

To set up a training session with the *Fish Iowa!* mentor nearest you, contact the Iowa DNR's Aquatic Education office at 641/747-2200, or by email to bstnrg@netins.net. For more information about 4H Fish Iowa workshops, go to www.extension.iastate.edu/fishiowa/.

For more information, contact Barb Gigar at 641-747-2200.

###

DNR UNVEILS NEW WEB SITE

DES MOINES — If you visit the State Capitol Complex in Des Moines, you'll find a great deal of construction going on. But not all of it makes use of bricks and backhoes.

Visitors to the DNR's web site will find some striking changes beginning in January. The department has begun a web site rebuilding and redesign project that will take nearly a year to complete. But the final product will be worth the wait.

"We've gone into this project with an eye toward the needs of our users," said Bob Castelline, the site's designer. "We think the public is going to love it."

The redesign focuses on three objectives, one of which is to create a site that operates from the user's perspective.

"Our goal here is that when users open our homepage, they get an immediate feeling that the page is asking, 'What can we do to serve you?'" Castelline said. "That's a switch from a site that says, 'Here we are. Look at us.'"

A second objective is to create a site that maximizes ease of use while maintaining a strong visual image. The homepage will feature two completely separate navigation areas. One is for users who are familiar with DNR structure. The other will feature easy-to-follow links that will guide users who might not know what the DNR has to offer.

The web site also will be easier to access. The site's domain name will change to www.iowadnr.com, making it easy to remember. Netster Solutions, previous owner of the domain name, donated the name to the DNR.

Users will also find a new page header and eye-catching graphic elements, as well as news, features, tips, links to important outside agencies and much more. All this will be done on a homepage that will take about five seconds to download on a 56K modem.

In addition, users eventually will be able to subscribe to *The Iowa Conservationist* online, with the convenience of making payment by credit card.

"We're committed to making online subscription available to our readers," said Al Foster, the magazine's managing editor. "We're in the process of testing our software, and as soon as it's ready, we'll be up and running."

The final objective is to create a web site that has consistency in form and function throughout. With three divisions, 15 bureaus and more than 2,000 pages containing roughly 2 gigabytes of information, this is no simple task.

"Users need to know that no matter where they are in our site, they're still in the DNR," Castelline said. "This part of the project is the most difficult for us to accomplish because it involves so many pages and all of our bureaus. That means it will take the longest to complete."

The DNR homepage is and running, but all bureau pages won't be complete until the fall of 2003. While the site should be fully functional at all times, users should be aware that unforeseen problems could occur along the way.

DNR Webmaster Tracy Cardwell urges users not only to have patience, but also to speak up when they encounter problems.

"If a link doesn't work or a similar problem occurs, we need to know," Cardwell said. "If you come across a problem, give us a call. We want to make it right."

For more information, contact Bob Castelline at (515) 281-0879, or by e-mail at bob.castelline@dnr.state.ia.us. To report a problem with the web site, contact Tracy Cardwell at (515) 242-6526, or by e-mail at tracy.cardwell@dnr.state.ia.us.

###

IOWA FISHING REPORT

For the week of January 28, 2003

www.state.ia.us/fish

For current information on fishing conditions for your lake or area, contact the office in that district. Phone numbers are listed with each district report. Ice fishing reports will be released every week while quality ice conditions exist.

Southwest

Big Creek Lake (Polk): Crappie fishing is spotty in the main portion of the lake, although some anglers have caught some nice fish using wax worms or minnows. Some bluegills are being caught in shallow water areas. Channel catfish are being caught off Williams Drive using jigging spoons. Walleye are also being taken with jigging spoons, but most are below the 15-inch length limit.

Don Williams (Boone): Crappie fishing is fair with most anglers using wax worms and minnows. Some largemouth bass have also been reported, although most are below the 14-inch minimum length limit.

Lake Ahquabi (Warren): Bluegill fishing is slow to fair off the day-use area using wax worms and minnows. There was open water last week toward the middle of the lake that has recently frozen so ice conditions vary greatly across the lake.

Hooper Lake (Warren): Some bluegills have been caught, although generally fishing activity has been slow due to ice and weather conditions.

Rock Creek (Jasper): Crappie fishing has been slow using wax worms and minnows. Ice conditions are better in the northern part of the lake, and at last report there was still some open water in the southern part of the lake.

Easter Lake (Polk): Channel catfish fishing has been good using a variety of baits. Crappie fishing has improved with the cooler weather, although still spotty. Largemouth bass fishing remains slow although a few have been taken along the face of the dam.

Hickory Grove Lake (Story): Crappie fishing has been slow to fair, with some activity over the past week.

Viking (Montgomery): Bluegill and crappies are good on teardrops tipped with wax worms and minnows.

Manawa (Pottawattamie): Anglers are catching bluegill near tin can dike using teardrops tipped with wax worms.

Willow (Harrison): Good for bluegills on wax worms.

Three Mile (Union): Ice varies from 6 to 10 inches, with some open water areas that the waterfowl are keeping open, so be careful. Bluegills are good on wax worms early morning and evening hours in flooded timber. Crappie and walleyes are being caught on minnows.

Twelve Mile (Union): Ice varies from 6 to 10 inches with some open water areas, so be careful. Bluegill, crappie, small yellow bass and walleye are good in early morning and evening hours in flooded timber or areas northeast of the west dock.

Fogle (Ringgold): Bluegill, channel catfish and crappie are good in flood timber and brush piles.

Green Valley (Union): Crappie and bluegill are fair in east arm.

Badger Creek (Madison): Fishing is generally slow during the day. The best activity for bluegill and crappie is in morning and evening.

West Lake Osceola (Clarke): Bluegill and crappie are fair. The best action is in the morning and evening.

Little River (Decatur): Fishing is good for bluegill, crappie and walleye in flooded timber areas near creek channel.

Farm Ponds: Ice fishing is good for bluegill on wax worms.

For more information on fishing in southwest Iowa, call the regional office in Lewis at 712-769-2587.

Southeast

Mississippi River Pools 16 – 19: Backwater areas of the Mississippi on pools 16 – 19 continue to have solid ice conditions. Anglers in **Big Timber** and **Eagle Fill** on pool 17 are reporting good fishing for bluegills and slow to fair fishing success for crappie. Fishing is good for bluegills in **Bell's Pocket** in pool 18 with some sorting of smaller fish. Boat ramp access on pools 16 – 19 continues to be blocked by ice, which has shut down walleye and sauger fishing in the tail-waters.

Lake Odessa (Louisa): Bluegills are biting near the fallen trees in Sand Run. Use a slow jigging motion with a teardrop jig tipped with a wax worm

Lake Geode (Henry): Good ice arrived late last week. Not a lot of anglers have been out on it yet.

Washington and Keokuk County Conservation Board Ponds: Don't forget these smaller bodies of water. Ice has been good on these for a while (6 to 8 inches). Bluegill fishing has been good using a wax worm on a green or chartreuse teardrop jig fished near the bottom. The fish are not real aggressive and are hitting light. Crappies are also hitting light; use minnows for the best chances to catch old paper-mouth.

Lake Rathbun (Appanoose): Crappies have been biting on small tube jigs. Areas around Atwell's Landing and in the cove near Honey Creek State Park have been the most productive. Areas with brush piles have been holding the most fish.

Lake Wapello (Davis): Bluegills and crappies have been biting on small jigs tipped with a wax worm.

Lake Miami (Monroe): Crappies and bluegills have been biting on small jigs and minnows.

Lake Sugema (Van Buren): Bluegills have been hitting on small jigs tipped with wax worms or minnows.

Lake Macbride (Johnson): Anglers are catching crappies off the deep brush piles throughout the lake on teardrop jigs tipped with wax worms.

Lake Iowa (Iowa): Fishing the deeper brush in the morning and evening hours has been fair for panfish.

Pleasant Creek (Linn): Fishing the west end of the lake has been fair for bluegills using wax worms.

Coralville Reservoir (Johnson): Crappie fishing has been fair in the morning and evening in deeper brush piles.

For more information on fishing in southeast Iowa, call the regional office in Brighton at 319-694-2430.

Northeast

Mississippi River: Ice conditions are excellent. Fishing for northern pike and largemouth bass using tip-ups baited with shiners is good in the **Minnesota Slough** area backwaters of and **Lansing Big Lake** in Pool 9. Pool 10 **Bussey Lake** has also been excellent for tip-up fishing northern pike and bass. Bluegill and crappies are still biting on wax worms on Pool 10 in the **Harpers Ferry** area and **McGregor**. Pool 11 **Swift Slough** and **Bertom** and **McCartney lakes** have been good for crappies, bluegills, bass and northern pike. Pool 12, **Fishtrap** is good for bluegill and crappie. Anglers are catching bluegills at **Kehough Slough**. In Pool 13, anglers are catching bluegills and a few crappies in **Brown s Lake**, **Scarborough** and **Michelsons**. Anglers are catching crappie and bluegills and a few yellow perch in **South Sabula Lake**. Anglers have had nice catches of crappie and bluegill at **Green Island**, **Saw Mill** and **Snag Slough**. Fishing is good for bluegills at **Potters Marsh**. Pool 14, some bluegills and crappies are being caught in **Cattail Slough**. Fishing is fair for bluegills and crappies at **Schrickers** and good at **Rock Creek**. Fishing is good for bluegills and crappies at **Mallard Bay**. Anglers fishing Pools 12 – 14 have been mainly using wax worms and artificial lures.

Alice Wyth Lake (Black Hawk): Bluegills are good on wax worms and spikes. Fish the bay around the boat ramp during evening hours for best success.

Casey Lake (Tama): Bluegill fishing is good with an occasional crappie taken on wax worms fished around structure.

For current information on trout fishing during the winter, call the **Manchester Trout Hatchery** at 563-927-5736, the **Big Spring Hatchery** at 563-245-1699 and the **Decorah Hatchery** at 563-382-3315.

For information on fishing in northeast Iowa, call the regional office in Manchester at 563-926-3276.

Northwest

Spirit Lake (Dickinson): Yellow perch are still active on the north side of the lake, but the perch anglers are having better success on the east side of Spirit. Perch are being caught on pilkees and teardrops with wax worms or wigglers on the hook. Bluegill and crappies are biting at the North Grade on teardrops with wax worms. Walleyes have slowed, but some anglers are still catching fish on the east side, using minnows or minnow heads on a jig and raps or kastmasters.

West Okoboji (Dickinson): The Winter Games were held in Smith's Bay last weekend. Now that the activity has slowed, the fishing should pick up in that area. Walleye fishing is slow, but some are being caught in Miller's and Smith's bays. In Miller's Bay, walleyes are being caught in 14 to 15 feet of water on minnows. Crappies are slow, but some are being caught in Miller's and Smith's bays. Bluegill fishing is excellent, especially in Smith's Bay and in the north end of the lake. Use teardrops with

a wiggler or wax worm. Northern pike fishing is great throughout the lake. Better locations include Miller's and Smith's bays, and at the north end of the lake. Try using chubs. Yellow perch are slow. Some are being caught with teardrops tipped with a wiggler or wax worm in Smith's Bay.

East Okoboji (Dickinson): Anglers are catching a few walleyes in front of Parks Marina.

Lake Minnewashta (Dickinson): Fishing is fair for bluegills.

Silver Lake (Palo Alto): Yellow perch fishing remains hit and miss with the best bite in the afternoon. Minnows and slip bobbers or jigs with a minnow head are good producers.

Elk Lake (Clay): Anglers are catching some walleyes, especially towards evening.

West Swan Lake (Emmet): Northern pike are excellent. Most fish are 18 to 22 inches. Use a tip up with a chub.

Badger Lake (Webster): Fishing is good for 8 to 9-inch crappies using live minnows. Bluegills are good on teardrops and wax worms. The bluegills are running 7-1/2 to 8-1/2 inches.

Brushy Creek (Webster): Walleye fishing is good in 40 feet of water. Use jigging spoons and minnows. The best bite is late afternoon.

Clear Lake (Cerro Gordo): Walleye fishing is slow. The best activity is after dark. Most fish caught are below the 14-inch minimum length limit, but an occasional legal-sized fish is being caught. Yellow bass are being caught around the island on jigging spoons with cut bait or minnows.

Indian Lake, Eldred Sherwood Park (Hancock): Bluegill fishing is good. Some sorting is required, but 7 to 8-inch fish are available.

For more information on fishing in northwest Iowa, call the regional office in Spirit Lake at 712-336-1840.

###